

In the Specification:

Please replace paragraphs [0002], [0007], [0017], [0019], [0020], [0022] and [0023] with the following amended paragraphs:

[0002] The rotary cutter bar of many rotary mower conditioners are contained within a housing which includes a door comprising a rectangular panel which is disposed generally horizontally when closed, and a curtain coupled in depending relationship to a forward edge of the panel so as to extend vertically across the front of the machine. The curtain is pushed back by the standing crop, as the mower-conditioner advances, to allow the crop to be cut. The curtain provides shielding for the operator and bystanders from foreign objects which are engaged and propelled by the rotating cutting discs. The curtain and door assembly is typically hinged at the top of the housing so as permit the curtain and door assembly to be raised to allow better access for service of the cutter bar area of the machine. In some cases, this door and curtain assembly can be damaged by accidentally leaving the door open and effecting an operation which results in the tongue sweeping ~~operating the tongue swing cylinder which causes the tongue to sweep~~ into the zone occupied by the open access door.

[0007] This object is achieved, in accordance with a first embodiment of the invention, by providing an operative connection between the tongue and the access door defined by a door engaging ~~support~~ structure carried by the tongue and against which the door may rest ~~tongue rests~~ when the door is opened, with the door engaging structure ~~support~~ being shaped such that it causes the door to be moved away from the path of movement of tongue in response to contact between the door engaging structure and the tongue caused by the tongue being swung toward the door.

[0017] The main frame 12 further includes a draft tongue support structure 22 which is joined to, and projects forwardly from, a leftward region of the cross beam 14, however, the particular location of the tongue support structure on the beam 14 is not important to the present invention. A draft tongue 24 has a rear end coupled to a forward end of the support structure 22 by a vertical pin 26 which establishes an upright axis about which the tongue 24 may pivot horizontally. Coupled between the support structure 22 and the draft tongue 24 is an extensible and retractable hydraulic cylinder 28, with the latter being shown in a fully retracted position wherein

it positions the tongue 24 in a leftmost working position. It is to be noted that basic aspects of the present invention require only that the tongue 24 somehow be swung about the axis of the pin 26. For example, in lieu of the cylinder 28, any well-known remotely releasable coupling could be established between the tongue 24 and beam 14, which when released permits the tongue 24 to pivot about the pin 26 by driving the towing tractor in an appropriate direction to effect swinging of the tongue in a desired direction.

[0018] A crop harvesting platform 30 includes a platform frame 32 including opposite side walls 34 joined by a rear frame structure 36. The frame 32 is suspended from the carrier frame 12 by a three-bar ~~four-bar~~ linkage including a lower pair of links 38 and an upper link ~~pair of links~~ 40. The lower pair of links 38 are respectively located at opposite sides of the platform 30 and have rear ends respectively pivotally coupled to the pair of wheel support arms 18, and have front ends respectively pivotally coupled to lower rear locations of the platform frame structure 36. A pair of counterbalance springs 42 have upper ends respectively coupled to upper front locations of the pair of legs 16 and have lower ends respectively coupled to lower rear locations of the platform frame member 36.

[0019] Thus, it will be appreciated that the platform 30 may be moved between a lowered working position and a raised transport position through operation of the hydraulic cylinders 20 ~~49~~ for adjusting the wheels 21 relative to the frame 12.

[0020] The platform 30 includes a forward, generally horizontal top wall which extends between the opposite side walls 34. The top wall includes a relatively narrow, fixed rear rectangular section 44 and a front rectangular section 46 including a minor, fixed left-hand portion 48, and a major right-hand portion forming an access door 50 that is mounted to a forward edge of the rear section 44 by a horizontal hinge assembly 52 ~~48~~ that allows the door 50 ~~section 46~~ to pivot vertically. ~~The front top wall section 46 is divided into a right hand major portion defining a first access door 50, and a left hand minor portion defining a second access door 52.~~ Fixed to a forward edge of the first access door 50 is a flexible shield 54 that hangs vertically in front of a rotary cutter bar (the cutter bar has been omitted from FIG. 2 for the sake of simplicity) when the platform 30 is not in use. A flexible shield 56 is likewise mounted to a forward edge of the top wall left-hand minor portion 48. ~~second access door 52.~~ Thus, it will be appreciated that when it is desired to gain access to the rotary cutter bar located within the enclosure defined by the top wall portion 50 and

the flexible shield ~~shields~~ 54 and 56, this may be done by pivoting the access door 50, together with the flexible shield 54, upwardly about the hinge assembly 52 48 from its operative position, shown in FIG. 1, to its open position, shown in FIG. 2.

[0022] The present invention comes into play when the access door 50 is swung into its open position. Specifically, fixed to a lower right-hand surface location of a rear region of the tongue 24 is a triangular door engaging support plate 60. The door engaging support plate 60 may be of any effective shape and is here shown as having a shape of a right triangle, with the hypotenuse being fixed along the tongue 24, with the sides forming the right angle being located behind an upper left-hand corner of the access door 50, and with an edge 62 of the plate 60 extending forwardly from the right angle and making an angle of about 30° with the tongue 24. The edge 62 is engaged by, and supports the open access door 50 in a disposition where it is inclined gradually to the rear from the hinge assembly 48. The edge 62 is so disposed relative to the access door 50, that as the tongue 24 is swung toward the door, the door 50 is pivoted forwardly and closed before it is contacted by the tongue 24. Therefore, if an operator should inadvertently leave the access door 50 in its open position and then resume an operation where it is desired to reposition the mower-conditioner 10 relative to the towing tractor by swinging the tongue 24 toward the open access door 50, such an operation can be done without damaging the door 50 by engaging it with the tongue 24 since the door 50 will close before such an engagement occurs. While it is convenient in the disclosed embodiment for the door engaging plate 60 to be used to support the open access door 50, it will be appreciated that the door 50 may be supported in its open position by other structure.

[0023] Referring now to FIG. 4 there is shown an alternate embodiment where like structure is indicated by the same reference numerals given above. The only difference in structure is that instead of providing the tongue 24 with a door support plate, a linkage 66 is mounted between the tongue 24 and a central location of the access door 50. Specifically, the linkage 66 includes a link 68 having a left-hand end pivotally mounted, as at an upright pin 70, to a pair of vertically spaced ears 71 fixed to the tongue 24. A bell-crank 72 is mounted to the rear section 44 of the top wall of the of the platform 30 for pivoting about an upright pin 74 located to the rear of a central location of the access door 50. The bell-crank 72 includes a relatively short leg, which carries a swivel-eye 76 in which the link 68 is mounted for free sliding

movement, the short leg being joined to, and making an angle of about 90° with, a relatively long leg which carries a roller 78 at its free end. As considered when the tongue 24 is in its left-most position and with the access door 50 open, as shown in FIG. 4, the short leg of the bell-crank 72 ends generally perpendicular to the door 50 while the long leg of the bell-crank extends generally parallel to the access door 50 with the roller 78 engaging the open access door 50. An abutment 80, which may be defined by a washer secured to the rod 68, is positioned for engaging the swivel-eye 76 so as to cause the bell-crank 72 to pivot resulting in the roller 78 being swung forwardly a distance sufficient for closing the door 50 when the tongue 24 is swung toward the door. The length of the rod 68 which extends beyond the swivel-eye from the tongue ensures that the rod will remain within the swivel-eye 76 during operation with the door 50 in its closed operating position. The relative lengths of the short and long legs of bell-crank 72 ensures that sufficient motion will be imparted to access door 50 by the pivoting bell-crank 72 in response to movement of the tongue 24 for closing the access door 50 prior to the tongue reaching the door when swung toward it. For a simpler solution, the link 68 could be pivotally coupled directly to short leg of the bell-crank 72. This would result in the bell-crank 72 pivoting when the tongue 24 is swung subsequent to the door 50 being closed.